

## *Youth*

KEVIN PAINTED . . . AND  
THE CITY CAME ALIVE!

---

D. C. TEENS PUSH  
FOR BETTER SCHOOLS

---

GABRIEL DIALS DIRECT  
DOES GOD ANSWER?





**HELLO, GOD . . . IS THAT YOU?**

**Reported by CLYDE REE**



GOD: (*answering telephone on his desk*) Hello.  
VOICE: Hello, is . . . is that you, Chief?  
GOD: (*impatiently*) Yes, of course it's me! Who else could answer my hot line?  
VOICE: Whew! That's a relief. Then the report isn't true?  
GOD: What report? What are you talking about?  
VOICE: This is Gabe, . . . er, I mean, Lieutenant Gabriel calling, Sir. I was just checking to see if the rumor were true or not.  
GOD: (*very impatiently*) What rumor?  
GABE: Well, Sir, there's been a rumor going around, Sir, that you have . . . well, that you are . . . well, Sir . . . dead.



December 4, 1966

Editor: Herman C. Ahrens, Jr.

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Editorial address: Room 800, 1505 Race  
St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19102YOUTH magazine  
is publishedfor high school young people  
of theUnited Church of Christ  
and

The Episcopal Church

An Horizons edition is published  
for young people of the  
Church of the BrethrenYOUTH is also  
recommended for use  
among young people of the  
Anglican Church of Canada

YOUTH magazine is published every other week throughout the year (except during July and August, when monthly) by the United Church Press. The Horizons Edition is distributed to Brethren youth by The General Brotherhood Board—Church of the Brethren.

**Publication office:** 1720 Chouteau Avenue, St. Louis, Mo. 63103. Second class postage paid at Philadelphia, Pa., and at additional mailing offices. Accepted for mailing at a special rate of postage, provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized June 30, 1943.

**Subscription rates:** Single subscriptions, \$3.00 a year. Group rates, five or more to one address, \$2.40 each. Single copies, 15 cents each, double issues, 25 cents.

**Subscription offices:** United Church of Christ: Division of Publication, United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, 1505 Race St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19102. Episcopal Church: Circulation Department. YOUTH magazine, Room 310, 1505 Race St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19102. Church of the Brethren: General Brotherhood Board, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, Ill. 60120.

Cover photo by Ed Eckstein. Back cover photo by Ed Wallowitch.

GOD: (pause) Dead?

GABE: Yes, Sir. That you dead.

GOD: You're putting me on.

GABE: No, Sir, they seem too serious, Sir.

GOD: It's true that I'm no sp  
chicken anymore, but  
dead? Well, Gabe,  
can pass the word bac  
the other side that I'm  
much alive and kickinGABE: I'll be glad to, Sir. Did  
have anyone in mind  
a messenger over thGOD: Oh yes, well, whom do  
have on the other  
right now?GABE: Well, Sir, we did H  
Martin Luther, but  
came in out of the c  
Sir. A few years ago,

GOD: Yes, Gabe, I know.

GABE: (going through his n  
book) Let's see—we h  
a medium in Washing  
D.C., and a witch do  
in South Africa—but  
busy on a Saul Alin  
campaign. Then the  
the Beatles.GOD: The Beatles! Why  
A new song to annou  
the facts. "God is liv-  
ye-et!" But, Gabe, coul  
you get those guys to  
a haircut? Those mops  
me.GABE: Oh no, Sir. That wo  
cool it. . . . er, I me  
their popularity is tied  
with those haircuts.GOD: Okay, Gabe. I leave  
PR to you. Just get  
word around, huh?



**"So they say I'm dead," God mused.**  
**"It seems I've heard that story before."**

GABE: Yes, Sir. I'll do my best, Sir.

GOD: Now, Gabe, tell me. Just how did this rumor get started?

GABE: Well, as soon as I heard the rumor, I ran to the library and read everything I could find on it. I wanted to be sure of the facts before I checked in with you.

GOD: So what are the facts?

GABE: Well, Chief, there is a new movement, a very small one, called "radical theology," . . . and there are three young theologians at the center of it.<sup>1</sup>

GOD: Did you say *theologians*?

GABE: Yes, Sir. These theologians are writing books and articles announcing that you are dead. In fact, they started writing about your death several years ago, but they have just recently become popular. Some of the national magazines put them in the spotlight.

GOD: So the whole movement is just coming to public attention, is that it?

GABE: Yes, I'd say so. You may remember, Chief, that a German philosopher named Nietzsche proclaimed that "God is dead" over a hundred years ago. It's fairly common for someone to make that claim.

GOD: I remember. Is it possible, Gabe, that since there is a lot of concern right now about the relevancy of the churches and the value of religion, this movement strikes a nerve in modern man?

GABE: I'm sure that's true. The result is that people are questioning their old ways of thinking, and this may be all to the good.

GOD: What are they really saying, Gabe? Fill me in on the basic ideas they are trying to promote.

GABE: I've looked into this at some length, Chief, and it's kind of difficult to dig, even with all the theology I've studied through the years.

GOD: Why is it so difficult?

GABE: Well, basically, it's hard to understand because all three men say "God is dead," but when you try to pin down what they mean by that statement, they don't agree in their answers. The same writer will even offer several answers which contradict each other.

1. Thomas J. J. Altizer, William Hamilton, and Paul Van Buren.



- GOD: Then they are not sure exactly what they are trying to say and they seem to be saying several things at once.
- GABE: Right.
- GOD: Should we take them seriously, then?
- GABE: Definitely! From what I've read, these men have something important to say. I think we should listen to them with great care. Maybe it would help, Chief, if I outline some of the most common meanings of this rumor that God is dead.
- GOD: Now you sound like a professor, Gabe.
- GABE: Sorry about that, Chief. Now according to . . .
- GOD: (*interrupting*) Gabe, could you kindly knock off that "See . . . Chief" business? I wish you'd stop cluttering up your conversation with that smart TV lingo. If I hear that phrase again, I'll scream.
- GABE: Sor. . . . I mean, okay, Chief. Now, as I see it, there are at least three main ways to interpret what it means to say that God is dead. The first one is a very personal way. It's simple: For modern man, God does not seem to be alive. There is no God. It is the man who says, "Where is God? I don't see him; I don't feel him; I don't need him. Science answers my fears; science supplies my needs. Since I find no evidence of God, God must be dead."
- GOD: I admit this is quite common. And I think I can understand how some people can feel that way. There are always some persons in every generation who cannot honestly say that God exists for them.
- GABE: There's a new dimension to this argument today, though.
- GOD: What's that, Gabe?
- GABE: Some of these people have gone to church to find you, and they discover the churches are dead—or at least self-centered and irrelevant.
- GOD: So they become disillusioned with the churches and decide that I must be dead as well. Unless . . . unless they happen to stumble into one of the churches which has begun to turn itself inside out and come alive.
- GABE: We have a growing number of churches which are snapping out of it, don't we, Chief?
- GOD: It's beginning, but very slowly, Gabe. We hope there will be a great awakening soon.
- GABE: Here's another way to look at this God-is-dead movement. The radical theology boys sometimes speak of the old *idea* of God having to die. People know there's no whiskery old God sitting on a throne up in the sky, and no streets paved with gold up there.



**Wrestling with new ways of thinking  
can be good for people today," Gabe said.**

OD: So they throw out the baby with the bath and decide there must be no God if they don't see me in the clouds.

ABE: Right. The idea of God on a throne in the clouds somewhere is a dead duck. Let's face it. About time too, if you ask me.

OD: I'll go along with that! I've been working to get rid of that one for centuries. I'll be glad to see it go. By the way, Gabe, what did we ever do with that old throne?

ABE: Sold it to Twentieth-Century Fox for one of those Charlton Heston movies.

OD: (*groans*) Oh no!

ABE: So this second category leaves the need for a new understanding of who you are and what you're like, Chief. As the Madison Avenue boys would put it, we need a new image.

OD: The time is ripe, yes. (*makes some notes on a pad*)

ABE: The third way they explain what they mean is simply this. You actually were alive at one time in history and now you are dead. They find no trace of you in the modern world. Furthermore, they proclaim that man does not need you anymore. Man is come of age and can run the world without your help. He is now mature enough to manage his own affairs.

OD: Sounds pretty brave!

ABE: It is brave in a way. But it is also very interesting that they can say in one breath that God is dead, then speak of a new relationship with God in the future. At least some of them speak this way. In the midst of the despair that you are dead, they affirm that you may return in a new way.

OD: That's fascinating, isn't it? What do you think it all means?

ABE: Well, this is just one man's view, Chief. As I see it, this is a little bit like the teenager who must reject his parents and all they stand for in order to move away and become free as a growing individual. The radical theologians may be crying out on behalf of mankind that they must be free of God, but they understand God as one who would keep them in a child-like role—coming to church every Sunday, accepting outmoded doctrines they don't believe and so on. They are throwing off the shackles of what they feel is an out-dated religion in order to find a new and more creative relationship with you. ▶



- GOD: Gabe, when you put it that way, I think I understand feelings they are expressing. Man is growing up, and was to be treated as an adult, not a child. In the process of becoming free, he feels it necessary to cry out in rebellion. "To hell with you; I can make it by myself."
- GABE: At least that's what makes sense out of it all for me. In other words, once the adolescent starts growing on his own, the love of his parents—which he so recently rejected—now takes on new meaning and he discovers a deeper relationship with them.
- GOD: Hopefully, once man has declared his freedom, he can be open to the possibilities of a new and mature relationship with me—a kind of father-son partnership.
- GABE: That's possible. So in the end, the God-is-dead theology may be a tremendously hopeful sign on the horizon rather than wholly negative, as it might seem at first.
- GOD: One of the interesting aspects of this movement is that the men can say in one breath that I am dead, yet they still consider themselves Christians.
- GABE: Yes, it's interesting that for God-is-dead theologians, Jesus takes on more importance as the model for human behavior. They de-emphasize God, but place more emphasis on the man Jesus as the highest expression of humanity they know.
- GOD: Gabe, I want to thank you for bringing this to my attention.
- GABE: I want to thank you for answering when I called.
- GOD: Glad to help. And don't forget that there are many thousands of persons who know from deep personal experience that I am alive. They, too, are witnesses, and both points of view are making a contribution.
- GABE: That's good to keep in mind. The God-is-dead cry has received a lot of publicity, but there are many, many more people proclaiming that you are alive. Saying that through their experience of prayer, or healing, or some other religious experience, they have an unshakable conviction that you are real, and now they want to tell others about it.
- GOD: In that sense, the God-is-dead movement probably has called forth some genuine witnessing by people who didn't feel that was important before. It may have brought some of them out of the woodwork.
- GABE: Would you like to hear one I overheard the other day?
- GOD: I would indeed. Go ahead.
- GABE: In response to the God-is-dead cry, one Christian said: "Christ is very much alive—for me. And I know many others who share this deep conviction. You see, I know this from p



**"Sir, you've got a lot of believers here,"**  
**Gabe reported. "And they're on the move."**

sonal experience, not just as a logical proposition. When I cried out to God for guidance, I found a whole new direction for my life. When I needed strength and could not muster it from within myself, he gave me strength—to serve him. When I open my spirit to his love, I can feel that love filling me—to overflowing. The old concept of God, as the nice old man upstairs who will magically provide that new bicycle we pray for—that God is dead, to be sure. But the God I know is another God. One who calls us to be free of the old superstitions and fears. One who calls forth our best selves. One who puts the responsibility for this world into our laps and says, 'Here, you and I are partners. See what you can do with this mess.' This God is very much alive."

GOD: (chuckles) So, I'm not the man upstairs anymore.

GABE: No, Chief. That just won't work now.

GOD: What a relief!

GABE: Oh, by the way, Chief. I thought you might be interested in the latest poll.

GOD: Is my popularity slipping again?

GABE: Well, no. This poll was in *Look Magazine*, Sir. It tells what American youth think of you.

GOD: Those poor kids are always being polled. Well, what did they say?

GABE: According to *Look*, 86 per cent of American youth say they believe in God or a Supreme Being.

GOD: Well, would you believe . . .

GABE: Sir?

GOD: I said, isn't that interesting?

GABE: Oh! It isn't all good, however. The *Look* poll says American youth are religious, but they tend to reject organized religion.

GOD: That's not so bad. There's a lot of organized religion I myself have questions about. Anything else, Gabe? I have a call coming in on another line.

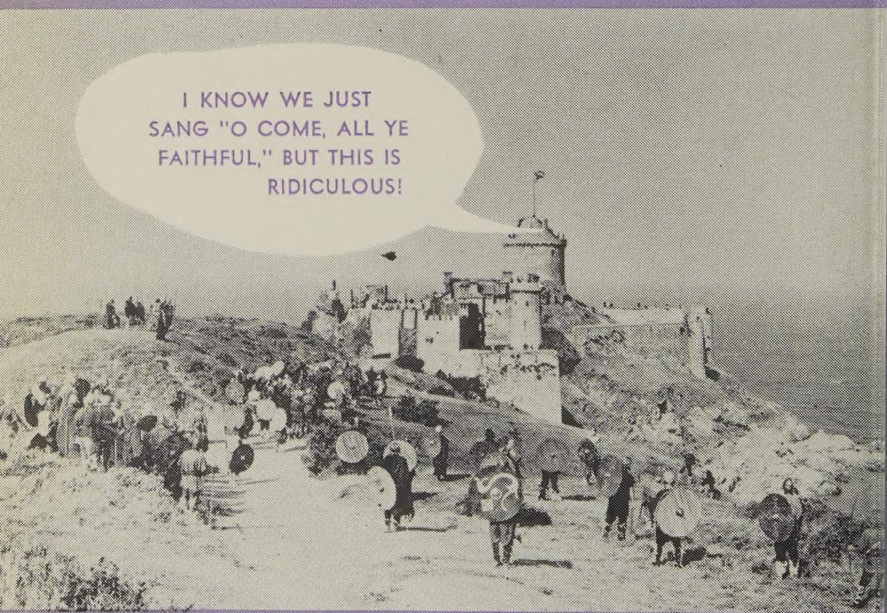
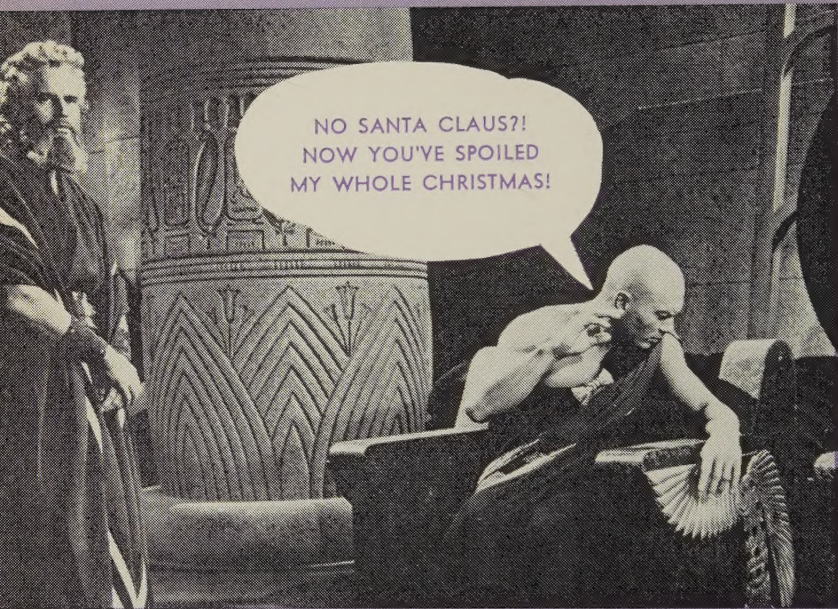
GABE: No, Sir, that's all for now.

GOD: Then, blow, Gabriel, blow!

LYNDE REID / Dr. Reid came to the staff of the Division of Evangelism of the United Church of Christ with a rich background and training in theology, parish ministry, journalism, small group psychology, youth work, and seminary teaching. He is author of such varied books as *The God-Evaders*, *Small Groups Are Here to Stay*, and *I Belong* (the United Church Curriculum course for junior highs).



# FLICKER:





BE PATIENT—THE  
TURKEY'S ALMOST  
DONE!



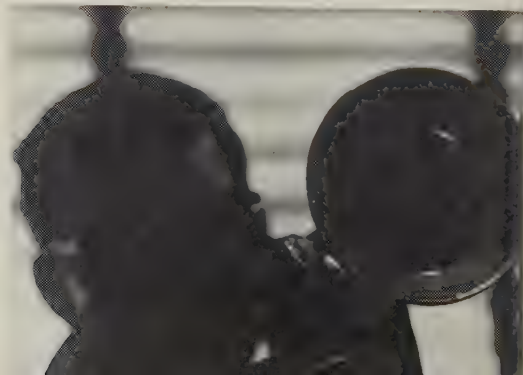
AUNT MARY GAVE YOU THIS TIE FOR  
CHRISTMAS AND YOU'RE GOING TO  
WEAR IT!



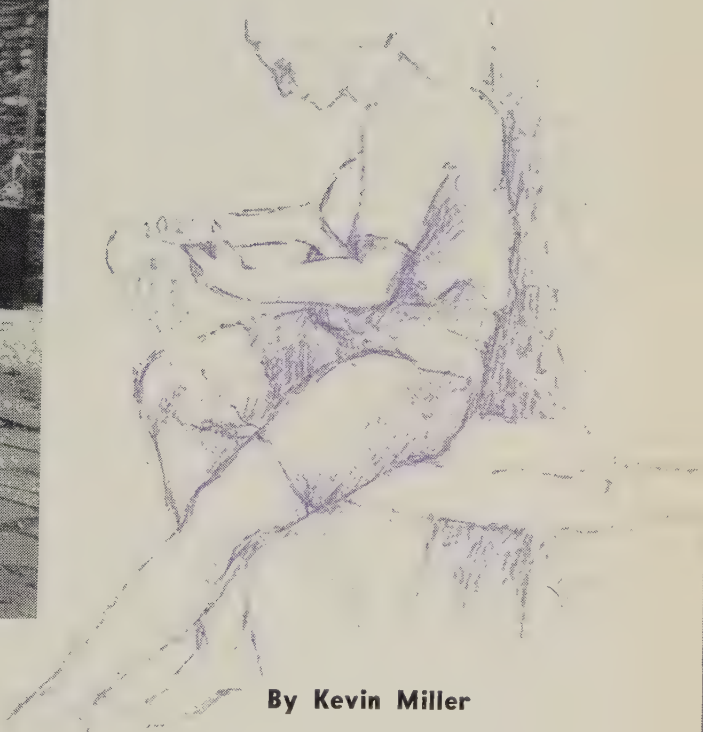




Letters from 2nd Avenue and







et . . .

**By Kevin Miller**

ar Family,

It's Saturday morning 20 minutes before 8:30 breakfast. I'm sitting in the fourth floor apartment waiting for the other five boys to get ready. You could see this place . . . three furnished rooms for setting up cots, a chenette, bathroom, television, radio, record player and paintings all over the walls. We have three big windows overlooking Tenth Street and one overlooking the St. Mark's Church courtyard. This apartment belongs to

New York City  
July 2, 1966





*On city streets where no one knew us, we felt*

the St. Mark's Minister of Arts who isn't in town just now. The girls living in the church rectory.

There is so much to tell! The place is wildly beautiful, and so much more exciting than I had ever dared imagine. The church is made of stone in a traditional style, having two stories and a steeple. It's the second oldest building in New York and was used to film the wedding scene in "The Group." In the courtyard, where Peter Stuyvesant is buried, there is a free sculpture exhibit. Every Wednesday night the huge iron gates are thrown open to the public for a jazz concert which I hear is very crowded. There are also poetry reading nights each week. During the winter the church is involved in an extensive program of drama, producing plays in a very professional way. This church has hundreds of "members-in-gratitude" who come only for the plays, jazz, and poetry readings, but are fulfilled by them and feel a kinship with the church because of its involvement. It is that very wonderful.

I wish I could convey to you how thrilled I am at the threshold of this experience. The eleven other kids are simply great. There are six boys and six girls; seven of us are high school seniors and four are in college. About five are interested in music, the rest in painting, with a smattering of dance and poetry, and mixtures of everything.

So far my first impressions of New York have not been adversely affected



whelming. The only thing that really surprises me is to see the drunken bums lying anywhere on the sidewalk, not bothering to leave their own fifth or shoo the flies from their open sores. . . .

Having a great time; glad you are there.

Much love, Kevin

*Thus I recorded in a letter to my family in McPherson, Kan., my first impressions after 24 hours in New York City. During the following six weeks many of these first impressions would be replaced and some confirmed. In the early spring I had seen a short announcement of the proposed "Work and Study Seminar for Young Artists" and wrote for further information to the Ecumenical Voluntary Service, 475 Riverside Drive, New York City. I applied and was accepted. In definition our project was organized for the purpose of finding ways to relate the various art forms to the basic human need found in our location. St. Mark's (Episcopal) Church in-the-Bouwerie is strategically located in the area of the Bowery and Greenwich Village. As you continue to read through these excerpts from my letters, you will form your own opinion concerning the success or failure of our group in achieving our defined purpose. Whether that purpose was fulfilled or not, I see the seminar in retrospect as a great success; but I will let my letters tell about it now in their own more immediate way.*

### **sing as we walked. People loved it!**

Dear Family,

Monday, July 4, 1966

Sunday evening we all went by subway to Central Park for the free band concert or a ballet. Having located the band, six of us danced off in search of the ballet—and I mean danced. Please don't think I'm crazy for the following paragraphs; it was the most lovely evening I can remember for a long time. Mark has a well-coordinated body and knows a little ballet. His mood was so contagious that I found myself leaping along—a glorified skip—in time with him. Soon all six of us were running and dancing down the walk through the groups of people. But who cares in Central Park, in New York? No one knows us, and everyone got a kick out of it. We couldn't find the ballet, so we went in search of a discotheque, talking to every policeman we saw. The man behind the police station desk told us little children to go to the zoo or the library. Defeatedly we walked away but began singing in a more sedate manner. The six of us broke into groups of two, walking double file singing rounds. We sang very well the three-part harmony of "Dona Nobis Pacem" right through Central Park. People loved it! Especially the old folks stopped to listen with unmocking smiles. We danced the polka on the closed park streets and wore ourselves very tired, but we were always laughing.

Then we met the rest of the group and sang folk songs and musical show songs to the subway entrance. Now I must tell you that a subway tunnel



has a very pleasing accoustical quality for transforming and magnifying sound. We lined up and sang "Dona Nobis Pacem" again. The echo was symphonic! Then we stood by the tracks and sang Negro spirituals. We actually had the people around us clapping along in rhythm. We sang to the top of our lungs on the clamorous train itself and had an old man make a request. You can't imagine how it feels to see the tired and content New Yorkers smile on the street, but maybe you have known what it is to sing joyfully enough that you become part of the song.

*"A person's ability to perceive joy and love"*





When we came into the rectory singing, the rector was "damn mad" and in "one hell of a bad mood," because the antipoverty commission had ordered him to hire a completely new staff for poverty work by Tuesday. The rector, Father Michael Allen, is quite a person. He has been arrested several times in civil rights work and is as liberal as all get out. He talked of the horrid civil rights problem here. I felt myself becoming depressed in all my tiredness and in the terrible reality of his words, so I told him that, right or wrong, I wanted to go to bed happy that night and I'd like to tell

*ows with his understanding of pain and ugliness"*

Photo by Ed Eckstein





## *Working with these kids opened a whole*

him of the wonderful, beautiful evening we had come through. He listened and said that a person's ability to perceive joy and beauty only grows with his understanding of pain and ugliness. I had told him of my sympathy for his talk with us; so we were on one plane of thought and gained something from each other.

I went to bed at 2:00 a.m. It was 106 degrees that day!

10:15 p.m., Tuesday, July 19, 1966

This is incredible! We have an evening at home—not going anywhere doing anything, or staying up till 1 a.m. I can remember only one or two other evenings of going to bed before midnight. I feel this is justified because New York is definitely a “p.m.” city. Things come alive in the evening, and besides, one can't see all the dirt when it's dark. We don't go up till 8:30 or 9 a.m. usually.

This afternoon John McCoy, Ann Johnson, Roger Essley and I went to Wally Barker's studio for our daily “apprentice” work. I enjoy Mr. Barker's amiable personality and his methodical, yet easy going, manner of working. I am learning the tedious but necessary processes of his profession and am gaining some small insight into his artistic attitude. Wally is working with severe geometric forms on an atmospheric background, creating his concept of paradox. At first I thought it was silly, but I'm beginning to really feel what he means. We are helping to prepare for his show. He says we will work on some actual paintings later. I don't understand how he is so patient with us.

The weekend was rather depressing for me—the “mid-morning slump” on a six-week project. The ecstasy of new friends and a great location has become somewhat worn off, and I'm tired of our schedule going in circles and accomplishing no defined purpose. There is a very insecure feeling about this experimental project—like groping in the dark. But I should be creating some light of my own, and having told myself this, I hope I'll follow my own advice.

What more should I be telling you? The weather is much cooler. It rained tonight and I walked in it like a fool, soaking myself to the skin, but having much fun and feeling very refreshed—a much needed feeling.

Sunday, July 24, 1966

Yesterday John, Mark and I went uptown for the performance of “Furry Girl” on Broadway to which we had bought tickets Friday. I enjoyed the theatre as much as the performance. It was so plush and elegant, I cannot feel really aristocratic.

Friday was our free day, so John, Mark and I bought some of the cheap tickets to “Mame,” “Fiddler on the Roof,” and “Hello Dolly.” We went to Radio City Music Hall which impressed me as being so much glitter. W



## d of people for us.

ent over to the Lincoln Center and  
sited the magnificent library of per-  
forming arts there. We have made  
ans to see the Gugenheim Museum,  
e Jewish Museum, and more of the  
etropolitan Opera summer concerts  
Lewisohn Stadium. Yesterday we  
w Jack Benny there and last Wed-  
nesday Van Cliburn. We hope to see  
ie Metropolitan Museum of Art, and  
heetah discotheque each a second  
me.

This morning most of the group  
ent to East Harlem to attend the  
ery interesting services at the Church  
f the Holy Communion, done in Eng-  
sh and Spanish for the biracial and  
international congregation. The ser-  
mon was a play done by the children  
nd minister of the church about the  
onversion of Paul and about Paul's  
ministry. During communion we cir-  
ed the round communion table (or  
assed about it) singing "let us break  
read together on our knees" and "let  
s drink wine together on our knees"  
s we passed those elements of the  
ommunion around.

Sunday I attended the Judson  
emorial Church which maintains a  
ee church position, although it is  
filiated with the American Baptist  
onvention and the United Church of  
hrist. The Judson Church is in-  
volved in a dance theatre and drama  
orkshop. The liberal churches here  
e truly alive and have a valid reason  
r existence. They are serving the  
mmunity at the level of the com-  
munity in unheard-of ways which  
ould have been heard of 50 years  
go. They are in all respects *open*  
the community, offering traditional

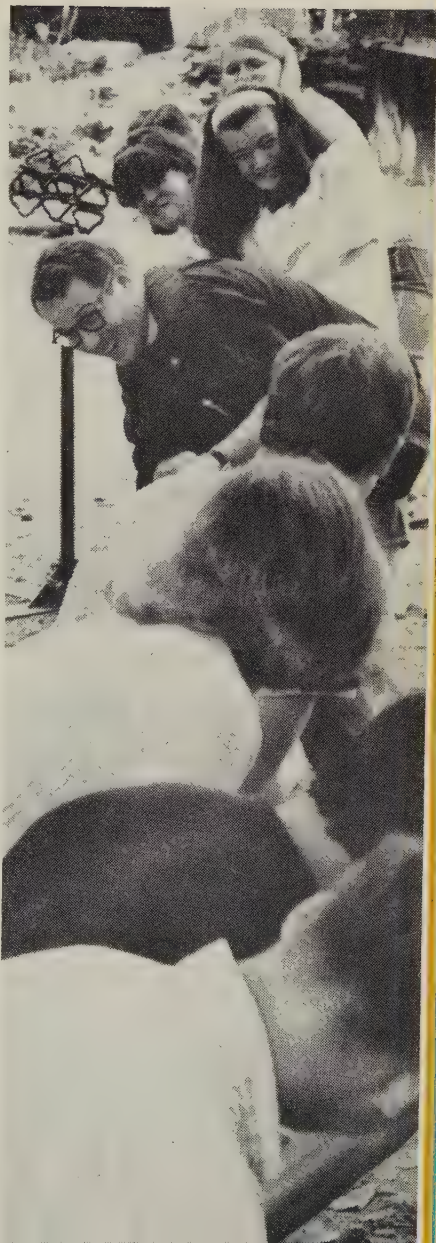


Photo by Ken Thompson

communion services and worship services as well as the contemporary artistic worship forms and artistic involvement to all interested members and non-members. Thus there is the possibility of fulfillment for many different kinds of people with different kinds of needs.

We're going to have a day at the beach next Thursday. It will be great to escape to the sea for a while.

July 31, 1966

A more definite service has developed for our group within the last week. We are helping the vagabond kids on Eleventh Street write and produce a play about Peter Stuyvesant coming back to life from his St. Mark's grave to see New York as it is today. This evening I helped construct a paper tree and paint scenery with the kids and our group, for the play.

Last Friday we had a bunch of kids from the community center over for painting and singing. The tempera and paper was available, but as often happens in the spontaneous moods of our painting experiments, something new developed and we all started painting each other's faces with tempera. You should have seen some of the faces running around—mine included! Then Mark, Greg, John, Diane, Wendy, and I walked around the block and into a bookstore as if nothing in the world was wrong. As on "Candid Camera," most people tried to act unsurprised not noticing anything different, but their first split-second reactions were great fun.

## *An hour with the piano eased my frustrations . . .*

There is to be a peace march here next Saturday which I plan to attend. Larry Hill, our director, may go with me. Mark and John think I'm very crazy even to consider such a thing. We had a long discussion about Vietnam and war in general the other night. I thought John would never speak to me again after hearing my true feelings. Mark wasn't too much more understanding.

Now in an attempt to answer your "little" questions, Mother: (1) Everyone has one major kitchen chore during the day and the jobs are rotated daily. (2.) Yes, we have some group discussions on our theological study materials and about our group activities. However, our backgrounds and points of view are extremely diversified and no one seems to agree with anything that anyone else says, so the discussions consist mainly of random comments and refutations. It's very disturbing really; almost futile to add one's voice to the din, so I usually don't say much and come out of the discussion badly needing an hour with the piano. I painted a furious self-portrait after one of our early "discussions." The more meaningful discussions take place in smaller groups, sitting on the apartment roof at night or walking down the street to get an Italian ice. (3.) Meals are the only really "set" item in our seminar schedule. Everything else is filled in according to the need or opportunity of the moment.





Monday, August 8, 1966

Yesterday afternoon we went to George Buckout's for lunch and discussion with some of the people of the church. I was rather amazed that the church people seemed so appreciative of our presence here and think we are doing a big service to the kids of the community. Margie Perkins of North Carolina has been the guiding force of the play and has spent the most time with the kids. She said that a whole new world of people has been opened up to her through contact with these kids and the Negroes we have met. She's going home to Carolina to just "be herself" and forget that the segregation line exists in her town.

The peace march Saturday was fascinating. We attended a service in memory of Hiroshima first at St. Clement's Episcopal Church, and then marched to and around Times Square several times, ending up at the Fort Tenth Street and Madison Avenue intersection (I think) with an estimated 20,000 people listening to several speeches. There was some jeering from isolated spectators and one very "militant" peace group, but aside from these, the demonstration was very peaceful.

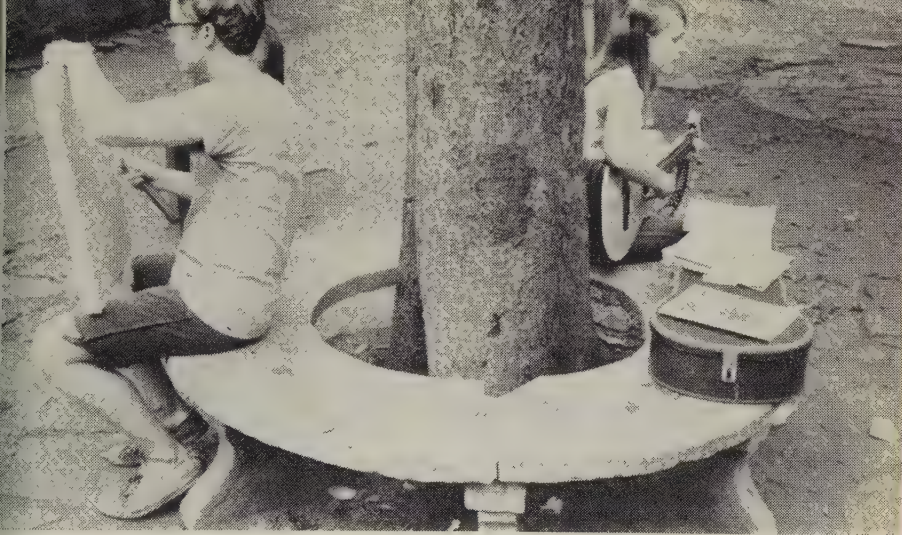
### *How does one relate the various*

Thursday, August 11, 1966

The play came off very well even though there was no coherence to the scenes and it was rather short. The audience, made up of children from the community center, loved it, and so did the kids in the play. The children in the audience were all asking when the next play would be, and the kids in the play were wanting to do another one. I was so happy about Margie who has really devoted herself to these kids and the play. If you know about the chaos and hectic times she came through with them in creating the play, you would appreciate the magnitude of the "small" success. For instance, there were times when she had to dismiss rehearsals because half the kids were too drunk to say their lines. The boys were continually asserting their masculine superiority over one another. They were stealing things outright from the church. On top of that she had trouble getting some of our group to do their parts in getting the production "on the road." She had us all hating her at times because she really took the "bull by the horns" and flung it where she wanted it. She knew that the play would never happen unless she was its tyrannical manager and so she was. I admire her an awful lot for that and so does the rest of the group (when they get over being mad at her), and the "Eleventh Street kids" simply love her. Margie and Sue, who plays the guitar and sings with the kids, have been the most successful in the service end of this project.

This morning we were up at 8:30 to get to our evaluation session with





## *ms to the basic human needs one sees in the city?*

Paul Abels, the originator of the project, at the National Council of Churches office building. I was very happy with the general attitude of the group—favorable to the project idea. We had a surprisingly deep discussion over the virtues and vices of the seminar.

I'm leaving tomorrow, in the late afternoon. Now that the seminar is over it all seems to fall into place and begins to make an awful lot of sense. All the disappointments and discouragements and depressions seem worth it. I feel that I am more "real" as a person for having been here.

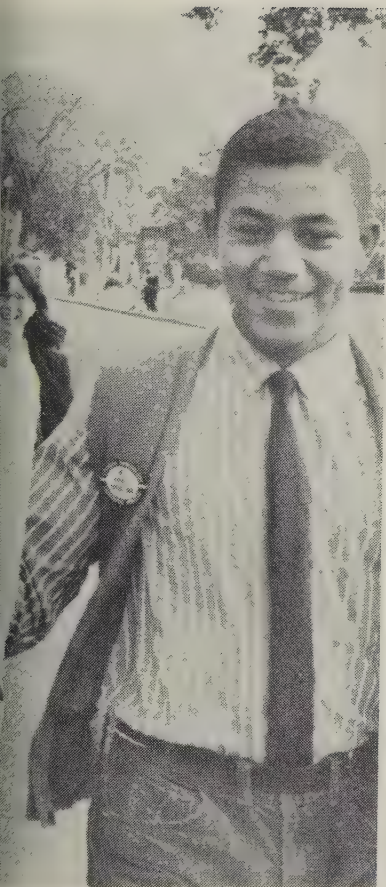
The place is ugly in so many ways but I'll miss it. The people are hard to live with, but I've learned much from them in an unmeasurable way and will miss them for a while. So I'm coming out of St. Mark's as happy as I came in, but in a much different way. It's a realistic happiness which is good to have, better than the ecstasy of my first impressions.

Much love, Kevin

KEVIN MILLER / A winner in **YOUTH** magazine's 1966 Creative Arts Award competition. Kevin is 17 and a member of the Church of the Brethren in McPherson, Kans.







Washington Star Photo

## *We proved that kids do care about better education*

BY ADELIA MOORE / It all began, late in August 1965, when I attended two "street-corner" rallies featuring Dr. Martin Luther King. His cry was one of horror at the apathy of District of Columbia residents, and his plea was one for action. As a student at one of the high schools in the system he deplored, I became very excited at the thought of organizing hundreds of students for the cause of better education. My ideas were very vague and I had practically no idea about a method of organization of my peers into a concerned, effective group. I discussed the plan with my parents, friends, and interested adults. And soon I gathered several classmates and friends from different schools together to discuss the possibility and relevancy of such a group.

Out of these small but enthusias-

tic meetings came a meeting in September, 1965, at which PUSH—Pupils United for Superior High Schools—came into being. The temporary chairmen had been chosen at the earlier meetings, but I had the last word, the last worry, and had to make the speech. Word was passed by flyers and word-to-mouth, and we called radio, TV, and newspapers to ask them to cover it. As I tapped the microphone for the attention of the 60 young people who had come, I nervously wondered just what I thought I was doing! I had no need to worry: every person voiced enthusiasm and ideas.

From this exciting first meeting came considerable radio publicity and plans for following meetings. We organized: any interested private or public junior or senior high school student was eligible to join, and could do so merely by filling out a simple questionnaire with questions such as whether or not he had hobbies which were possibly useful to PUSH, suggestions and/or criticisms, or access to a mimeograph machine. No dues were required; we decided to raise money as a group if we needed it. There were to be three chairmen from different schools, a secretary, treasurer, and a steering committee consisting of representatives from each school and the chairmen of our two large committees: Action and Publicity.

Our primary goal was narrowed to improvement of existing physical conditions because we thought that was most within our reach. We concentrated first on Shaw Junior High School, a run-down institution condemned for 16 years. Shaw, as an epitome, was to us Mississippi is to the Civil Rights Movement.

Deciding that one must be informed before he has any right to complain, our first action was to tour Shaw 60 strong. The day was particularly exciting for me. I was keyed up because of the importance of the occasion and because I had had my driver's license for two weeks and had driven 13 teenagers across town in our family's new station wagon. Many newsmen were there and soon I was singled out as the one "who started all this" and was asked to step outside for an interview—on television! It was really exciting to watch the newscast with my family that night, and to see on the bottom of the screen: Dee Moore, chairman of PUSH.

As a follow-up, we raised \$225 for Shaw at a benefit dance and presented it to the Parent-Teacher Association. We were disappointed that the only publicity we had was a space filler on the amusement



page, but other projects came in quick succession. A large scale Home Rule Parade and panels on the radio preceded our speaking to a group of teachers, whom we learned, are amazingly sensitive and indignant in the face of criticism.

Perhaps the most exciting activity that fall was our testimony before the House Education and Labor Committee's Congressional hearings on poverty and the District of Columbia Public Schools. About eight of us went, representing as many schools. They were very interested in all we had to say, and we were very excited about saying it. The ball-ceilinged room was crowded with other witnesses and concerned citizens, the same group which attends every hearing and community assembly to plead for better education, as indeed we did. We were introduced and each of us in turn reported on his high school and the conditions there. The testimony consisted not only of what we had prepared but our answers to the many inquiring questions they asked. As we left the room, still a little shaky, we were faced by several newsmen and cameras and interviewed for that evening's newscasts.

In March we held an open house at Shaw Junior High to show the public an example of their city's public schools. We invited not only the public but every U.S. Representative and U.S. Senator, all members of the School Board and the School Superintendent, the District Commissioners; in short, all those in authority with some jurisdiction over the schools in the District of Columbia. Our speaker was a local civil rights leader, who also, ironically was a close associate of Dr. King's. Dr. Hansen, the School Superintendent attended, as did staff members from the offices of Congressmen Powell and Ryan, and Rep. Dyal from California and his wife also came. Fifty PUSHers were here, and approximately 100 guests. Although the turnout and follow-up publicity were disappointing to our high hopes, we were later spoken about on the floor of the House of Representatives when an amendment about Shaw Junior High was being debated. It later was passed.

Following this project we planned to lobby, but found we had lost many interested PUSHers. We had in our files 200 names and had had about 50 active members. Perhaps through lack of activity, or just because it was Springtime, by the time we were going to lobby, our numbers had dropped so drastically as to make an effective lobby impossible. When we tried to get appointments with members of the

House Appropriations Committee, we were politely deferred or turned down. To try to compensate, I testified for the House Appropriations Committee's hearings on the District Budget, but found there a very unsympathetic ear. In fact, if the chairman paid any attention, it was because he had run out of things to say to the aide seated next to him.

At this point the few of us still actively interested began to feel very discouraged and decided to postpone organized activity until next fall, unless something came up. In May, a city-wide conference was held, called Students and Teachers for Better Schools, which several PUSH members attended. When a meeting of STBS was called for next fall, all PUSH members were notified, and since only a few attended, the two groups have virtually become one, although there is as yet no real organization or program.

Perhaps we didn't accomplish much materially, but we did learn to continue to add a small student voice to the many adult voices protesting the schools we attend. Changes are being made continually, though never often enough. We learned that, sadly enough, as groups like to "use" interested students. We learned that it takes more than a few to keep members, the public and the press interested, that action speaks louder than words, that those in authority are sensitive to criticism and easily alienated. We learned a lot about organization, planning, communication, politics and the power structure. Most important of all, we demonstrated that not all students are apathetic, many students care and will continue to care and are willing to spend a lot of time working for something in which they believe.

Although the future of PUSH, as such, is uncertain and although the voice will change names and members, it is only that kind of spirit which is determined to obtain better education for all that must—I believe will—continue. ▼

ADELIA MOORE / "Dee," who organized and served as chairman of PUSH, is 17 years old and a senior at Western High School in Washington, D. C. This summer she was a delegate from the Episcopal Church to the Ecumenical Youth Conference in Williams Bay, Wis.



# would you believe?

the small society

by Brickman



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Down in their hearts, wise men know this truth: the only way to help yourself is to help others.—*Elbert Hubbard*

Learning history is easy; learning its lessons seems almost impossibly difficult.—*Nicholas Bentley*

The function of the arts is to criticize life according to the artist's moral principles.—*Brooks Atkinson*

The world is my country,  
All mankind are my brethren,  
To do good is my religion,  
I believe in one God and no more.—*Thomas Paine*

Training is everything. The peach was once a bitter almond; cauliflower is nothing but cabbage with a college education.—*Mark Twain*

In a burning house I would save a cat before a Rembrandt. Life has more value than art.—*Alberto Giacometti*

When the time comes, like now, then the storm around me does not matter. Nothing human or earthly can touch me. A wilder storm of peace gathers in my heart. What seems unpossessable, I can possess. . . . What is unutterable, I can utter. Because I can pray. I can communicate. How do people endure anything on earth if they cannot have God?—*Dr. Thomas Dooley*

The world of science was recently startled by the announcement that a group of anthropologists has finally discovered the missing link between the apes and civilized man. It's us.—*George Desmond*

It is better to have loafed and lost, then never to have loafed at all.—*James Thurber*







# THE POPULAR CHRISTIAN

A SATIRE BY VICKI VAN HORN / "Hello, Mrs. Alisyn? This is Miss Prut from the Friendly Christian Church. We like to welcome all newcomers to our little town and invite them to all of our church activities.

"Oh, yes, we're very progressive. Just last week we had a friendly get-together with members of the Ku Klux Klan to promote better understanding among people of different beliefs. Since we don't want to offend anyone, we're taking some Negroes out to lunch next week. Every December we sell Hannukkah hoagies on behalf of our Hebrew brethren. Brotherly love, you know.

"How old are your children? We have a teen social every Saturday night called God-Au-Go-Go, featuring both sacred and sexular music. We bring the church into everyday life, so to speak. There are several religious publications to appeal to all tastes. Our teen readers enjoy 'Christian Confessions' and 'Pulp and Pulpit.'

"Tonight our scientific friends are participating with a Roman Catholic chemist in a panel discussion called 'Christian Chemistry, or the Missile and the Missal.' As you can see, we're very up to date and with it!

"Our minister? Oh, Mr. Thompson is a very popular friend, and so understanding! He brought our little church out of the red and since then we have prospered and prospered. 'Faith, hope, and prosperity,' as we say.

"I do hope you will consider visiting the Friendly Chirstians soon. If you have any questions you can call the main office and ask for the chairman of Christian publicity.

"Worship service? I almost forgot. This Sunday is Modern Influences Sunday, featuring 'Herman and the Sermon.'"

▼

VICKI VAN HORN / Since first appearing in the Creative Arts issues of YOUTH magazine, Vicki's satiric writings have been published nationally, including *Seventeen* magazine. She is now a college freshman from Pottstown, Pa.

# ODE TO FANTASTICKS

To be young  
In love with life—  
A separate, beautiful feeling,  
A time:  
Of sunlit days and windy nights,  
With moonlight painted on a turbulent sea  
Of being myself  
And not needing to prove  
My fascination  
With life,  
and love,  
and youth.

To do special things—  
for youth is special.  
To detach myself  
from the world of adults  
and be utterly and completely  
Absorbed  
by, all the new and exciting  
things that happen to me each day.

To live life—  
before it's too late  
to turn back  
and change the pattern of youth  
or to do things  
that never will be possible  
when youth is gone

To lie gazing at pounding surf,  
Wondering what lies beyond it,  
Or remembering a time,  
When, naively, I thought that I  
should grow up faster,  
And now wondering  
Whether I should grow up  
At all.

Written by Pamela Owen, 16, Newport Beach, Calif.

